

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SSM-03 IO-13 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /080 W

-----150906Z 073993 /23

R 150811Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3503

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USCINCEUR

SECDEF WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, MOPS, SY, LE, IS

SUBJECT: AL-BAATH COLUMNIST WARNS OF POTENTIAL ISRAELI

MILITARY ACTION IN SOUTH LEBANON

1. AMID AL-KHULI IN JUNE 13 FRONT PAGE AL-BAATH COLUMN ENTITLED "LEBANON -- THERE IS A GREATER DANGER," WARNED THAT "EVENTS ARE DEVELOPING IN SOUTH LEBANON IN SPEEDY MANNER THAT CALLS FOR CONCERN. AND HOSTILE ZIONIST MOVEMENTS ON OPPOSITE SIDE POINT TO MORE COMPLEX DEVELOPMENTS." HE FOUND A LINK BETWEEN GROWING CONFIDENCE IN PACIFICATION OF LEBANON AND DANGER OF MILITARY ACTION IN SOUTH: "ISN'T IT REMARKABLE THAT THIS ESCALATION IN THE SOUTH AND DANGEROUS ZIONIST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MILITARY MOVEMENTS SHOULD ARISE WHEN LEBANESE SITUATION ENTERS INTO STAGE OF RELAXATION CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF CAIRO ACCORD, INITIATION OF GENERAL POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND FORMATION OF LEBANESE ARMY TO ASSUME ITS NATIONAL TASK IN SOUTH?" KHULI ASSERTED THAT SOME "FORCES" WERE TRYING TO SUBVERT EFFORTS OF SARKIS AND AGREEMENT AMONG PARTIES TO LEBANESE CONFLICT.

2. KHULI CONTINUED THAT THESE FORCES WERE IGNORING ISRAELI SCHEME DIRECTED AGAINST SOUTH, "A BLOW NOT ONLY LIKELY BUT EXPECTED, WITH ITS GRAVE ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL REPERCUSSIONS." HE CALLED UPON ARABS TO CONFRONT PROBLEM GREATER THAN THEIR OWN MARGINAL DIFFERENCES, FOR "THE ENEMY WANTS TO EMPTY THE SOUTH. THIS IS AN URGENT PLEA FOR CONCERN IN LEBANON AND FOR WHAT LEBANESE PEACE DEMANDS."

3. ANOTHER COLUMNIST FROM AL-BAATH TOLD US EVENING JUNE 13 THAT IT WAS WIDELY KNOWN ISRAELIS BUILDING ROADS IN REGION OF LEBANESE BORDER; HE SPECULATED ROADS WOULD BE USED FOR ISRAELI TANKS IN EVENT OF ATTACK. HE CONFIRMED THAT MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES ARE WORRIED ABOUT AN ISRAELI THRUST INTO SOUTH LEBANON.

4. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST TIME IN APPROXIMATELY PAST TWO WEEKS THAT SYRIAN PRESS HAS SINGLED OUT SITUATION ALONG ISRAELI-LEBANESE BORDER FOR FOCUSED COMMENTARY. APART FROM SOME APPARENTLY GENUINE LOCAL ANXIETY ABOUT THREAT OF ISRAELI MILITARY ACTION THERE, DAMASCUS SEEMS TO BE USING LATEST RESURGENCE OF FIGHTING AS OCCASION TO PROMOTE MORE COOPERATION AMONG CONFLICTING PARTIES IN LEBANON.
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